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Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved:
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

I assure the "Jeffersonian" that it is wrong in stating that "the men who most fear paternalism in government have no dread of the infernalism of monopoly." On the contrary, it is the men who dread the infernalism of monopoly that most strenuously oppose paternalism in government (or rather government), for there is no more dangerous and cruel monopolist than government. A Jeffersonian ought to understand this; our contemporary does not, and hence I must be allowed to say that it is not entitled to its name.

The "Sturdy Oak" asks what incentive there would be to strive to get to heaven, if Bellamy's ideal government was a practical fact. Most sensible people think that even hell would be preferable to Bellamy's ideal government. By the way, "Waterman's Journal" has expressed the opinion that Nationalism would be threatened by the evil of over-population; but it seems to me utterly wrong. There would be a very powerful "natural" check in constant operation,—that of suicide. Life will be so intolerable then that it is safe to predict wholesale emigration to Nirvana.

The doctrine that a man who has no children should not be forced to support schools for other men's children is pronounced by the editor of the "Workmen's Advocate" the most "selfish and anti-social" ever promulgated. Had this been applied to the doctrine that no man should be advised, invited, recommended, or urged to pay for something his neighbors want, there would have been some sense in it, although of the commonest order. But for the fellows who want to force everybody to agree with them and submit to their dictation without murmur to brand as most "selfish and anti-social" the protest against such tyranny is indeed impudent and hypocritical to a degree that Pecksniff can never hope to reach.

Mr. Stuart makes a long answer to my article on "The New Abolition and Its Nine Demands," the gist of which is that he demands collective maintenance and control of ferries, but not of ferry-boats; of railways, but not of rolling-stock; of oceans, but not of ships; and of highways, but not of vehicles. Will he now have the goodness to explain what he means when he demands the collective maintenance and control of "electric *plants?*" The use of this expression in the ninth demand *proves* beyond a doubt that he did contemplate the collective control of boats and rolling-stock, and that his new interpretation is a deliberate and disgraceful dodge out of the corner into which I had driven him. And yet this is the man who lately passed the criticism upon the editor of Liberty that he was never willing to own up when he was wrong.

As evidence of the power and importance of the Nationalist movement, the "Workmen's Advocate" adduces the fact that even the Boston press, which it characterizes as "the most capitalistic in the world," finds it impossible to treat that movement otherwise than with respect. The simple truth is that the Boston press is the least capitalistic in America (I cannot say more, not pretending to know the world as well as the omniscient State Socialists), and that only in Boston could the Nationalists gain so much recognition as is accorded them. There are Socialists, Anarchists, and other reformers on the staffs of the Boston dailies, and the newspaper men here generally are not as eager to prostitute themselves as those of New York and Chicago. Boston has no paper as mean and cowardly as the New York "Times" or as shameless and malicious as the "Sun." However urgent the necessity for magnifying their own importance may be, the State Socialists, who are rapidly gaining a reputation for appalling ignorance of all social principles (despite their claim to a monopoly of science), should endeavor to get along without unwarrantable charges.

"Mr. Tucker has a strong dislike to any form of government, but if there is one thing which he dislikes more, it is any man who is successful, and this is the reason why he hates Henry George." This is the impression of a contributor to Philadelphia "Justice," A. H. Stephenson, which he (like all dogmatic theologians) has no hesitation in stating in the form of settled conviction. I hate all hypocrites and schemers who successfully impose upon the credulity and ignorance of the masses, and I try to tear the mask off their faces and expose their deformity. Those who deserve success will always find in me a warm supporter, and when success is deservedly achieved, no one rejoices more heartily than I. So far, however, as Henry George is concerned, it would be prudent to wait a little before boasting of his success. Long ago I predicted that he would go up like a rocket and come down like a stick; and though Mr. Stephenson may be afflicted with blindness, those who have good eyes see Mr. George coming down. Once down, he will surely be left alone to meditate and repent. Justice is not vindictive or cruel.

The Fiction of Natural Rights.

[Dyer D. Lum in Pittsburg Truth.]

The very corner-stone of Anarchistic philosophy is often supposed to be a paraphrase of Herbert Spencer's "First Principle" of equal freedom, that: "Every person has a natural right to do what he wills, provided that in the doing thereof he infringes not the equal rights of any other person." Yet there lurks in the expression a fallacy that correct thought must repudiate, or we must carry with us a diagram explaining the meaning of the words we use.

What are "*natural* rights?" In the middle ages schoolmen believed that they had solved a problem in physics by asserting that "nature abhors a vacuum"; but a very little study sufficed to convince thinkers that "the web of events" we group as "nature" neither abhors nor likes. With the growth of the conception of law as a term descriptive of mode of being rather than a fiat imposed upon events, the term "natural" has lost much of its old teleological meaning. Still it is often used in that sense and too often implies it.

Blackstone defined "the law of nature" as "the will of man's maker." Mackintosh calls it "a supreme, invariable, and uncontrollable rule of conduct to all men." Sir Henry Maine also speaks of "a determinable law of nature" for the guidance of human conduct. Kent defines it as that "which the creator has prescribed to man." F. Q. Stuart, in his "Natural Rights," says expressly: "A natural right is a privilege vouchsafed by natural law to man to exercise his faculties," and his whole work teems with expressions implying the fixity of "real law."

The correct position is, I maintain, that what we term "natural rights" are *evolved*, not conferred, and if so they are not fixed and unalterable. Nature confers no more "privilege" upon us than upon dogs to exercise our faculties or functions. In fact, to my mind, the very assumption of "natural rights" is at war with evolution. Even if we no longer personalize nature as their giver, the term still carries with it the implication of rigidity, when, in fact, not even that mythical "right reason" with which we are supposed to be endowed can prove them historically so characterized. Every man is supposed to have a "natural right" to life. Is this co-eternal with man? Did it exist, though unrecognized, among our prognathous ancestors? If the savage transcended "natural right" in disposing at will of the life of a captive, where was it inscribed? It was not incarnated in the semi-brute. If the Roman law was based upon "a type of perfect law" in nature, was the recognition of the "natural right" of a father over the lives of his family contrary to the "right reason" of the time? And to this query convictions founded upon nineteenth century deductions are not pertinent.

Is woman's "natural right" as a "person" the same in all countries under polyandry, polygamy, and monogamy? or are those relations of the sexes, so important to "well-being and good conduct," ignored by beneficent nature? It has been conclusively shown by sociologists that human progress (and there is no other) consists in passing from the militant *régime* toward an industrial one. Yet the time was when the *lex talionis* sanctified revenge as the highest virtue. Time was when not a human being on the face of the earth differed from Aristotle's opinion of slavery as a natural condition. Where was this "privilege vouchsafed by natural law" then inscribed? The question whether society would not have been far more conducive to happiness if such right had been recognized, is as idle as whether eyes behind our heads would not have been equally so. If the "Principle" was not discoverable then, but has been now, are we to conclude that it is the final synthesis of "right reason"? or that its Incarnation is only now visible?

Having thus shown a few of the queries which arise to puzzle one who seeks for evidence of the immutability of "natural rights," let us examine closer into the nature of "rights" themselves. The human sphere is a province conquered from nature, and hence its relations cannot be termed "natural." It would be equally as permissible to call them moral or religious, for the qualifying adjective being given to imply the highest validity, it would be so understood by all to whom either of these words conveyed such meaning. Equally permissible, but equally indefensible in evolutionary thought when implying fixity. But do there exist any such inherent predicates of *human* nature as "rights?" The same theological bias which characterized "rights" as "natural" also regards their assertion as positive. On the contrary, every assertion of a right purely human, paradoxical as it may seem, is negative. The assertion of a "right" is but a protest against iniquitous conditions. Social evolution ever tends to the equalization of the exercise of our faculties. That is, social intercourse has slowly evolved the Ideal that peace, happiness, and security are best attained by equal freedom to each and all; consequently, I can lay no claim in equity to a privilege, for that which all alike may enjoy ceases to be privileged. The important deduction from social evolution is that as militancy has weakened and industrialism widened its boundaries, liberty has ever tended toward such equalization. Privilege finds no sanction in equity as right, because it violates the ideal of social progress—equality of opportunities.

Therefore it is that, as social relations have become more complex and integrated, the Ideal of "a more perfect form of liberty" rises in the form of protest against what only then are discernible as socially wrong, though ostensibly as assertions, such as "rights of women," "rights of labor," "rights" of children and sailors against flogging, the right to the soil, etc. They are fierce and burning assertions just so far as they emphasize a growing protest against inequitable conditions. In this sense they are Anarchistic, inasmuch as only by the extension, in other words, the abolition of restrictions, is the wrong righted. Our specific "rights" are thus dependent upon our ability to discern wrongs, or the violation of the ever-evolving industrial ideal—equality of opportunities, and exist but as protests. Abolish vested wrongs, and there will be no vested rights, natural or otherwise. Precisely as water flows to a level when obstructions are removed, just so will social relations flow to equitable conditions when restrictions are swept away. And precisely also as liberty comes in does the assertion of "rights" go out.

THE RAG-PICKER OF PARIS.

By FELIX PYAT.

Translated from the French by Benj. R. Tucker.

PART FOURTH.

THE STRUGGLE.

Continued from No. 154.

"Speak," said he.

Claire fell upon her knees and solemnly declared:

"My God, I recognize thy justice . . . my punishment is even less than my crime . . . may my confession purchase thy pardon!"

And rising again, she said firmly to the commissary:

"Monsieur, I am the guilty party. Yes, I allowed my child to be sacrificed to my honor, and allowed the accusation of this girl who sacrificed her honor to my child."

Then in a feebler voice:

"To her, to her then this crown that tortures me, these ornaments that reproach me, all these signs of purity, love, and happiness!"

As she tore the flowers from her bosom, they fell at Marie's feet.

"It is just," she concluded; "to her my place, to me hers! And it is for us both to reward her, Camille; for me, by dying; for you, by living for her."

Marie sustained her, saying in tears:

"Oh! poor woman. My God, pardon for her! I thank you for myself!"

Jean wiped his moist eyes with the back of his hand.

"What!" he exclaimed, "am I going to soften too?"

Claire uttered a cry of anguish.

"Ah! my heart is breaking. It is the end of the ordeal. . . I die relieved. This saint's tears put out the fires of hell."

She fell into the arms of Marie and Rosine.

Jean, on the alert, heard an officer's whistle, and, turning to the commissary, he said:

"The baron."

"Take me away," begged Claire; "take me away that I may die in peace!"

Rosine, aided by two servants, led the dying woman into her apartments.

"Two," cried Jean, when she had disappeared. "Now for the other, the third and last . . . the worst. . . . And let us strike the iron while it is hot. All hands retire!" he ordered with authority.

The numerous guests withdrew.

"What a piece of news for my journals!" said Louchard, delighted.

"And the contract?" asked Loiseau of Gripon.

"And the bonds?" exclaimed the latter. "Bah! nothing but a change of names."

"You are right," said Loiseau, the last to go out. "They will have need of us again directly. A marriage deferred, but not lost!"

Jean approached the commissary, took him by his overcoat, and said in a persuasive tone:

"Remember your promises, my magistrate. I hold the cards, and you watch the game. . . . Let me finish the job; go in yonder, I pray you."

He made the commissary go into another room. Then he said to Camille and Marie:

"And you go in there."

He pushed them towards another door.

There remained Laurent and Léon, very much flurried and confused.

The rag-picker got rid of them with a few kicks, saying:

"Ha! ha! my brandy-drinking valets, cup-bearers to Mandrin! there you are, then! Well, take that! And that! And dodge this one, if you can. Go look for me in the cellar."

Left alone, he went toward a *portière*, took off his basket, then his blouse, and concealed himself entirely.

"Now it lies between us two," he said. "He or I!"

The private door opened, and the baron walked in.

"Madame Potard has gone," said he, as he entered. "The rascal's house is shut up. All is said. Now to the salon."

"Halt!" cried Jean, revealing himself and barring the way.

"The rag-picker!" cried Baron Hoffmann, starting back in surprise.

Jean placed himself before the door by which the baron had just entered.

"Yes, Monsieur Baron," said he, quietly.

"Here?" questioned the other.

"Waiting for you!"

"And free?"

"A little!"

"You have escaped," said the baron, as he imperiously rang a bell.

"You ring for the deaf," said Jean, not at all disconcerted. "Your daughter is caught, Madame Potard is caught . . . . and you are guarded."

"I!"

"Yes, you, and closely. And I am a witness for the prosecution, with documentary evidence to confront and confound you."

He pointed to the basket and the hook.

"Look," said he, "do you recognize that tool? And this one? Notice the rust of Didier's blood."

The baron tried to go out through the door by which he had entered.

"Let me pass," he growled.

Jean raised the hook and barred the door.

"No thoroughfare," said he. "I have settled Marie's account; now for my own!"

The banker tried to seize Jean by the collar, but the latter released himself with a sudden movement, sneering:

"Ah! yes, the same old fist! A regular screw-twister. I recognize it. Twice goes, but not three times! Every day is not a *fête* day. I am not drunk, as I was at the table and at the quai, when we were only two, two rag-pickers, and when one of us killed Jacques, either you or me."

"I! Baron Hoffmann?"

"Baron of the basket! You, a double knave, a false baron and a false rag-picker, a real robber and a real murderer. You killed the man as surely as you killed the child. The first crime produced the second, and the second proves the first. Madame Potard has spoken, and so has your daughter. . . . All is said, known, understood; and those who have arrested the daughter will soon arrest the father. It is over with the whole race."

"Dead!" exclaimed the baron in despair.

"Not yet," said Jean.

"How so?"

"While there's life, there's hope, and if you wish" . . .

"What? Say on!" asked the baron, ardently.

"If you wish, you can escape," said Jean. "One can give the guard the slip here as well as at the castle of Ham; you are not more difficult to pass than a prince."

Showing his blouse:

"Napoleon's trick, you see."

"Ah! I understand. Well, this full pocket-book, a million, Claire's dowry! . . . my dress-coat for your blouse."

"You are on the scent; but I want more than gold today! You have accused me, save me, I will save you."

"Well! How?"

"A confession that will clear me."

"So be it," acceded the baron, running to a table and writing the confession.

Then, after showing it to Jean, he said:

"Take and give."

Jean grasped the paper and gave his garment.

"There!" said he; "fly in that, like a pretender. Honor the blouse!"

The baron put on the blouse over his coat and threw his hat into a corner.

Jean continued sardonically:

"Resume also the basket, which you should never abandon again. Banker, that is your punishment and your salvation. You will pass, like a letter through the mails, under the envelope of the rag-picker."

The baron hesitated and then accepted, saying hopefully:

"Thank you. I will go!"

Then, becoming Garousse again as of old, he went toward the secret exit.

As he was about to rush out, he uttered a cry:

"Ah!"

The agent of the commissary who had noted his entrance had anticipated his exit.

He rose before him.

"Derailed!" exclaimed Jean. "So much the worse . . . but for him only!"

The commissary, attracted by the noise, came in again with his men.

"Remain, Monsieur," said he to the baron.

Marie and Camille, called by Jean, entered in their turn.

The banker looked at them savagely, and then, throwing off his basket, tearing off the blouse, and throwing down the hook, he straightened up desperately.

"Well," he cried, "let it end, then,—this long suicide of crime! begun in the blood of another . . . let it end in mine! Today as formerly. . . . Better death than the basket."

He went out, led by the officers.

"Every one to his taste," concluded Jean.

And addressing the commissary, he said:

"Three! Quits, Monsieur! Here is the confession of the father after that of the daughter."

The magistrate took the paper.

"Yes, said he, "quits and free!"

He followed the baron, after a final bow.

Camille, Marie, and Jean threw themselves effusively into each other's arms.

"Ah! my dear wife, what joy!" exclaimed the young man.

"They suffer," exclaimed Marie, sympathetically.

And Jean said to Camille:

"Didn't I tell you that I would restore her to you? Ah! here are your thirty thousand francs!"

He handed him the notes, but Camille refused them.

"O noble friend, our true father, keep them!"

"I have no further need of them," said Jean.

Camille, indicating the mansion with a gesture, responded:

"In fact, all that is ours is yours. We owe everything to you. You shall live with us."

"No, no," said Jean, giving Marie a look of ineffable tenderness, "she is happy. That is all I want. . . . Oh! yes!"

"What is it?" asked Camille.

Jean, giving the baron's old basket a kick, answered simply:

"A new basket."

CHAPTER XI.

THE MARRIAGE.

That evening, as the clock of the Invalides struck half past eleven, the coach of the Roman ambassador at Paris drew up discreetly in front of the archbishop's palace.

Several prelates got out, escorted by lackeys dressed like the Swiss of Notre-Dame, and entered the ecclesiastical residence, the door of which opened immediately for their lordships.

The pope's nuncio, accompanied by his dignitaries, had come to take the archbishop to bless the union of Camille Berville and Claire Hoffmann at his pious embassy. . . .

They slowly traversed the spacious and gloomy apartments of the palace, regardless of the beautiful religious paintings that vainly covered the walls with their monotonous *spirituelle* lust. They had just entered the chapel.

Mgr. Affre was at the other end, buried in a large red velvet arm-chair, in the shadow of the altar.

He gave no sign of life at the approach of his important visitors, and, without stirring, allowed them to approach as near as possible and bow. Then only did he rise, gravely return their salute, and look at them for some moments without laughing, like a Christian augur.

"Is this the hour?" he asked at last.

And without waiting for the reply, he added:

"Let us start."

"We have still a quarter of an hour's grace," said the ultramontane.

"Then let us talk," rejoined the archbishop.

The two illustrious brothers in Jesus Christ walked back and forth beside the communion table, and, while the other prelates listened or conversed in low tones, they held the following colloquy:

"In your opinion what should be our attitude toward the Republic?" began the archbishop.

And he awaited the reply attentively.

"Hostile, very hostile," declared the nuncio. "We must reestablish the monarchy, royalty, or empire, no matter which," he continued, making a threatening gesture under his evangelical robe, "provided we get rid of the government of the *canaille*."

To be continued.

The Economic Tendency of Freethought.

[A lecture delivered before the Boston Secular Society by Voltairine de Cleyre.]

FRIENDS, — On page 286, Belford-Clarke edition, of the "Rights of Man," the words which I propose as a text for this discourse may be found. Alluding to the change in the condition of France brought about by the Revolution of '93, Thomas Paine says:

The mind of the nation had changed beforehand, and a new order of things had naturally followed a new order of thoughts.

Two hundred and eighty-nine years ago, a man, a student, a scholar, a thinker, a philosopher, was roasted alive for the love of God and the preservation of the authority of the Church; and as the hungry flames curled round the crisping flesh of martyred Bruno, licking his blood with their wolfish tongues, they shadowed forth the immense vista of "a new order of things": they lit the battle-ground where Freedom fought her first successful revolt against authority.

That battle-ground was eminently one of thought. Religious freedom was the rankling question of the day. "Liberty of conscience! Liberty of conscience! Non-interference between worshipper and worshipped!" That was the voice that cried out of dungeons and dark places, from under the very foot of prince and ecclesiastic. And why? Because the authoritative despotisms of that day were universally ecclesiastic despotisms; because Church aggression was grinding every human right beneath its heel, and every other minor oppressor was but a tool in the hands of the priesthood; because Tyranny was growing towards its ideal and crushing out of existence the very citadel of Liberty, — individuality of thought; Ecclesiasticism had a corner on ideas.

But individuality is a thing that cannot be killed. Quietly it may be, but just as certainly, silently, perhaps, as the growth of a blade of grass, it offers its perpetual and unconquerable protest against the dictates of Authority. And this silent, unconquerable, menacing thing, that balked God, provoked him to the use of rack, thumb-screw, stock, hanging, drowning, burning, and other instruments of "infinite mercy," in the seventeenth century fought a successful battle against that authority which sought to control this fortress of freedom. It established its right to be. It overthrew that portion of government which attempted to guide the brains of men. It "broke the corner." It declared and maintained the *anarchy*, or non-rulership, of thought.

Now you who so fear the word *an-arche*, remember! the whole combat of the seventeenth century, of which you are justly proud, and to which you never tire of referring, was waged for the sole purpose of realizing anarchism in the realm of thought.

It was not an easy struggle, — this battle of the quiet thinkers against those who held all the power, and all the force of numbers, and all the strength of tortures! It was not easy for them to speak out of the midst of faggot flames, "We believe differently, and we have the right." But on their side stood Truth! And there lies more inequality between her and Error, more strength for Truth, more weakness for Falsehood, than all the fearful disparity of power that lies between the despot and the victim. So theirs was the success. So they paved the way for the grand political combat of the eighteenth century.

Mark you! The seventeenth century made the eighteenth possible, for it was the "new order of thoughts," which gave birth to a "new order of things." Only by deposing priests, only by rooting out their authority, did it become logical to attack the tyranny of kings: for, under the old *régime*, kingcraft had ever been the tool of priestcraft, and in the order of things but a secondary consideration. But with the downfall of the latter, kingcraft rose into prominence as the pre-eminent despot, and against the pre-eminent despot revolt always arises.

The leaders of that revolt were naturally those who carried the logic of their freethought into the camp of the dominant oppressor; who thought, spoke, wrote freely of the political fetich, as their predecessors had of the religious mockery; who did not waste their time hugging themselves in the camps of dead enemies, but accepted the live issue of the day, pursued the victories of Religion's martyrs, and carried on the war of Liberty in those lines most necessary to the people at the time and place. The result was the overthrow of the principle of kingcraft. (Not that all kingdoms have been overthrown, but find me one in a hundred of the inhabitants of a kingdom who will not laugh at the farce of the "divine appointment" of monarchs.) So wrought the new order of thoughts.

I do not suppose for a moment that Giordano Bruno or Martin Luther foresaw the immense scope taken in by their doctrine of individual judgment. From the experience of men up to that date it was simply impossible that they could foresee its tremendous influence upon the action of the eighteenth century, much less upon the nineteenth. Neither was it possible that those bold writers who attacked the folly of "hereditary government" should calculate the effects which certainly followed as their thoughts took form and shape in the social body. Neither do I believe it possible that any brain that lives can detail the working of a thought into the future, or push its logic to an ultimate. But that many who think, or think they think, do *not* carry their syllogisms even to the first general conclusion, I am also forced to believe. If they did, the freethinkers of today would not be digging, mole-like, through the substratum of dead issues; they would not waste their energies gathering the ashes of fires burnt out two centuries ago; they would not lance their shafts at that which is already bleeding at the arteries; they would not range battalions of brains against a crippled ghost that is "laying" itself as fast as it decently can, while a monster neither ghostly nor yet like the rugged Russian bear, the armed rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger, but rather like a terrible anaconda, steel-muscled and iron-jawed, is winding its horrible folds around the human bodies of the world, and breathing its devouring breath into the faces of children. If they did, they would understand that the paramount question of the day is not political, is not religious, but is economic. That the crying-out demand of today is for a circle of principles that shall forever make it impossible for one man to control another by controlling the means of his existence. They would realize that, unless the freethought movement has a practical utility in rendering the life of man more bearable, unless it contains a principle which, worked out, will free him from the all-oppressive tyrant, it is just as complete and empty a mockery as the Christian miracle or Pagan myth. Eminently is this the age of utility; and the freethinker who goes to the Hovel of Poverty with metaphysical speculations as to the continuity of life, the transformation of matter, etc.; who should say, "My dear friend, your Christian brother is mistaken; you are not doomed to an eternal hell; your condition here is your misfortune and can't be helped, but when you are dead, there's an end of it," is of as little use in the world as the most irrational religionist. To him would the hovel justly reply: "Unless you can show me something in freethought which commends itself to the needs of the race, something which will adjust my wrongs, 'put down the mighty from his seat,' then go sit with priest and king, and wrangle out your metaphysical opinions with those who mocked our misery before."

The question is, does freethought contain such a principle? And right here permit me to introduce a sort of supplementary text, taken, I think, from a recent letter of Cardinal Manning, but if not Cardinal Manning, then some other of the various dunce-capped gentlemen who recently "biled" over the Bruno monument.

Says the Cardinal: "Freethought leads to Atheism, to the destruction of social and civil order, and to the overthrow of government." I accept the gentleman's statement; I credit him with much intellectual acumen for perceiving that which many freethinkers have failed to perceive: accepting it, I shall do my best to prove it, and then endeavor to show that this very iconoclastic principle is the salvation of the economic slave and the destruction of the economic tyrant.

First: does freethought lead to Atheism?

Freethought, broadly defined, is the right to believe as the evidence, coming in contact with the mind, forces it to believe. This implies the admission of any and all evidence bearing upon any subject which may come up for discussion. Among the subjects that come up for discussion, the moment so much is admitted, is the existence of a God.

Now, the idea of God is, in the first place, an exceeding contradiction. The sign God, so Deists tell us, was invented to express the inexpressible, the incomprehensible and infinite! Then they immediately set about defining it. These definitions prove to be about as self-contradictory and generally conflicting as the original absurdity. But there is a particular set of attributes which form a sort of common ground for all these definitions. They tell us that God is possessed of supreme wisdom, supreme justice, and supreme power. In all the catalogue of creeds, I never yet heard of one that had not for its nucleus unlimited potency.

Now, let us take the deist upon his own ground and prove to him either that his god is limited as to wisdom, or limited as to justice, or limited as to power, or else there is no such thing as justice.

First, then, God, being all-just, wishes to do justice; being all-wise, knows what justice is; being all-powerful, *can* do justice. Why then injustice? Either your God can do justice and won't, or he doesn't know what justice is, or he can not do it. The immediate reply is: "What appears to be injustice in our eyes, in the sight of omniscience may be justice. — God's ways are not our ways."

Oh, but if he is the all-wise pattern, they should be; what is good enough for God ought to be good enough for man; but what is too mean for man won't do in a God. Else there is no such thing as justice or injustice, and every murder, every robbery, every lie, every crime in the calendar is right, and upon that one premise of supreme authority you upset every fact in existence.

What right have you to condemn a murderer if you assume him necessary to "God's plan"? What logic can command the return of stolen property, or the branding of a thief, if the Almighty decreed it? Yet here, again, the Deist finds himself in a dilemma, for to suppose crime necessary to God's purpose is to impeach his wisdom or deny his omnipotence by limiting him as to means. The whole matter, then, hinges upon the one attribute of authority, the central idea of God.

But, you say, what has all this to do with the economic tendency of freethought? Everything. For upon that one idea of supreme authority is based every tyranny that was ever formulated. Why? Because, if God is, no human being, no thing that lives, ever had a *right!* He simply had a *privilege*, bestowed, granted, conferred, gifted to him, for such a length of time as God sees fit.

This is the logic of my textator, the logic of Catholicism, the only logic of Authoritarianism. The Catholic Church says: "You who are blind, be grateful that you can hear: God could have made you deaf as well. You who are starving, be thankful that you can breathe; God could deprive you of air as well as food. You who are sick, be grateful that you are not dead: God is very merciful to let you live at all. Under all times and circumstances take what you can get, and be thankful." These are the beneficences, the privileges, given by Authority.

Note the difference between a right and a privilege. A right, in the abstract, is a fact; it is not a thing to be given, established, or conferred; it *is*. Of the exercise of a right power may deprive me; of the right itself, never. Privilege, in the abstract, does not exist; there is no such thing. Rights recognized, privilege is destroyed.

But, in the practical, the moment you admit a supreme authority, you have denied rights. Practically the supremacy has all the rights, and no matter what the human race possesses, it does so merely at the caprice of that authority. The exercise of the respiratory function is not a right, but a privilege granted by God; the use of the soil is not a right, but a gracious allowance of Deity; the possession of product as the result of labor is not a right, but a boon bestowed. And the thievery of pure air, the withholding of land from use, the robbery of toil, are not wrongs (for if you have no rights, you cannot be wronged), but benign blessings bestowed by "the Giver of all Good" upon the air-thief, the landlord, and the labor-robber.

Hence the freethinker who recognizes the science of astronomy, the science of mathematics, and the equally positive and exact science of justice, is logically forced to the denial of supreme authority. For no human being who observes and reflects can admit a supreme tyrant and preserve his self-respect. No human mind can accept the dogma of divine despotism and the doctrine of eternal justice at the same time; they contradict each other, and it takes two brains to hold them. The cardinal is right: freethought does logically lead to atheism, if by atheism he means the denial of supreme authority.

I will now take his third statement, leaving the second for the present; freethought, he says, leads to the overthrow of government.

I am sensible that the majority of you will be ready to indignantly deny the cardinal's asseveration; I know that the most of my professedly atheistic friends shrink sensitively from the slightest allusion that sounds like an attack on government; I am aware that there are many of you who could eagerly take this platfrom to speak upon "the glorious rights and privileges of American citizenship"; to expatiate upon that "noble bulwark of our liberties — the constitution"; to defend "that peaceful weapon of redress, the ballot"; to soar off rhapsodically about that "starry banner that floats 'over the land of the free and the home of the brave.'" We are so free! and so brave! We don't hang Brunos at the stake any more for holding heretical opinions on religious subjects. No! But we imprison men for discussing the *social* question, and we *hang* men for discussing the economic question! We are so very free and so very brave in this country! "Ah!" we say in our nineteenth century freedom (?) and bravery (?), "it was a weak God, a poor God, a miserable, quaking God, whose authority had to be preserved by the tortuous death of a creature!" Aye! the religious question is dead, and the stake is no longer fashionable. But is it a strong State, a brave State, a conscience-proud State, whose authority demands the death of five creatures? Is the scaffold better than the faggot? Is it a very free mind which will read that infamous editorial in the Chicago "Herald": "It is not necessary to hold that Parsons was legally, rightfully, or wisely hanged: he was mightily hanged. The State, the sovereign, need give no reasons; the State need abide by no law; the State is the law!" — to read that and applaud, and set the Cain-like curse upon your forehead and the red "damned spot" upon your hand? Do you know what you do? — Craven, you worship the fiend, Authority, again! True, you have not the ghosts, the incantations, the paraphernalia and mummery of the Church. No: but you have the "precedents," the "be it enacteds," the red-tape, the official uniforms of the State; and you are just as bad a slave to statecraft as your Irish Catholic neighbor is to popecraft. Your Government becomes your God, from whom you accept privileges, and in whose hands all rights are vested. Once more the individual has no rights; once more this intangible, irresponsible authority assumes the power of deciding what is right and what is wrong. Once more the race must labor under just such restricted conditions as the law — the voice of the Authority, the governmentalist's bible — shall dictate. Once more it says: "You who have not meat, be grateful that you have bread; many are not allowed even so much. You who work sixteen hours a day, be glad it is not twenty; many

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Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the excise man, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

State Banking versus Mutual Banking.

To the Editor of Liberty:

In view of the favorable criticism which "Involuntary Idleness" received at your hands, I gladly accept the invitation to state my reasons for advocating governmental management of the circulating medium, rather than free banking.

My studies have led me to the conviction that mutual banking cannot deprive capital of its power to bring unearned returns to its owner. Referring to my exposition of the monetary circulation between the financial and the industrial group, and the inevitable effects flowing from the power of money to bring a persistent revenue, it follows that a normal condition can only be attained if interest on money loans is reduced to the rate of risk, so that, in the aggregate, interest will just pay for the losses incurred by bad debts; and this desideratum will not result from mutual banking. The members of such banks must no doubt be in some way assessed to defray the expenses and losses incurred by the banking associations, and these assessments are virtually interest payable for the loan of mutual money. While these rates are lower than the current rates of the money-lenders, the mutual banks will be more and more patronized, which will have a depressing effect on the current rate of interest. But the increase of membership will cease as soon as the current rate has adapted itself to the rate payable to the mutual banks.

We must now assume that the assessments of the mutual banks are in substance equitably distributed among their members; otherwise, such banks cannot compete against others who have adopted the more equitable rules. These assessments must obviously cover, not only the expenses of the banks, but also occasional losses; and that such losses should be assessed in proportion to the rate of risk attached to the security each "borrower" offers for the faithful redemption of his obligation requires here no explication. But other outlays, such as the making of the notes, together with all the attending expenses, must also be paid by the members of the mutual banks, and this increases the interest virtually payable by the borrowers beyond the rate of risk. Consequently competition will be incompetent to lower the current rate of interest to this desirable point. Money-lenders will therefore still be able to obtain an income from the mere loan of money, and capital will continue to return interest to the wealthy. The germ of the inequitable congestion of wealth will still linger after the introduction of mutual banking.

At this point the question arises as to who should pay for that part of the expenses of the financial system that relates to the production of the money tokens. The answer is not difficult when it is considered that the benefit of the medium of exchange accrues to those who use it. They should contribute, as near as possible, in the proportion in which their handling wears the tokens, for in the long run the cost of production will virtually resolve itself into the cost of replacement. Not the borrowers, then, who as members of the mutual banks would be obliged to do so, but the people at large, in whose hands the money circulates, are in equity under the obligation of this expense. And to accomplish this I see no other way than for the people to instruct their representatives to make the notes at public expense, distribute them according to the demand, and charge no cost to the borrowers exceeding the rate of risk attached to the securities offered by them.

I should of course never attempt to deny that mutual banking would be by far better than the present oppressive system. But the question at issue is between mutual banking, which would not remove, but only mitigate, the source of involuntary idleness, and a system involving a complete eradication of the cause of the discrepancy of the supply and the demand of commodities. My preference for the latter does, however, not imply that any restrictions should be placed upon mutual banking; such institutions could for obvious reasons not compete against the government institution, and would fail to find a suitable soil for their growth.

Before concluding I also wish to meet the objection of the critic of "Involuntary Idleness" to the use of the word "Capital" in its concrete sense. Having frequent occasion to refer to "labor products used for further production" in contradistinction to "money", I elected to use the shorter term "capital", especially as I had no need to refer, during the discussion, to its other and perhaps more appropriate meaning. I attempted to express thoughts, and made use of words as tools, the selection of which cannot commit me to any opinion. In fact, I am convinced that "Capital" in contradistinction to "Wealth" must lose its significance in either of its concepts as soon as the people learn to make honest laws.

Yours truly, HUGO BILGRAM.

PHILADELPHIA, JANUARY 18, 1890.

Mr. Bilgram, then, if I understand him, prefers government banking to mutual banking, because with the former the rate of discount would simply cover risk, all banking expenses being paid out of the public treasury, while with the latter the rate of discount would cover both risk and banking expenses, which in his opinion would place the burden of banking expenses upon the borrowers instead of upon the people. The answer to this is simple and decisive: the burden of discount, no matter what elements, many or few, may constitute it, falls *ultimately*, under any system, not on the borrowers, but on the people. Broadly speaking, all the interest paid is paid by the people. Under mutual banking the expenses of the banks would, it is true, be paid directly by the borrowers, but the latter would recover this from the people in the prices placed upon their products. And it seems to me much more scientific that the people should thus pay these expenses through the borrowers in the regular channels of exchange than that they should follow the communistic method of paying them through the public treasury.

Mr. Bilgram's statement that money-lenders who, besides being compensated for risk, are compensated for their labor as bankers and for their incidental expenses "thereby obtain an income from the mere loan of money" is incomprehensible to me. He might just as well say that under government banking the officials who should receive salaries from the treasury for carrying on the business would thereby obtain an income from the mere loan of money. Under a free system the banker is as simply and truly paid only the normal wage of his labor as is the official under a governmental system.

But, since Mr. Bilgram does not propose to place any restrictions upon private banking, I have no quarrel with him. He is welcome to his opinion that private banking could not compete with the governmental institution. I stoutly maintain the contrary, and the very existence of the financial prohibitions is the best evidence that I am right. That which can succeed by intrinsic merit never seeks a legal bolster.

I am agreeably disappointed. In challenging Mr. Bilgram on this point, I, knowing his intellectual acumen, had braced myself to withstand the most vigorous onslaught possible against Anarchism in finance, but it was a needless strain. Mr. Bilgram has struck me with a feather. T.

Need of Greater American Intelligence.

One F. de Gissac writes in the "Open Court" on the "Need of an American Department of Public Instruction and Fine Arts." He begins by deploring the "prosaicism of American life," the absence of ideals in, and the anti-artistic nature of, our civilization; and he undertakes to point out the causes of this great defect as well as the steps necessary to be taken for its correction.

It appears that the "low, mercenary spirit and ignorance, imported by European emigration, is the first cause of the evil," and the "tyrannical and quasi-exclusive influence exerted by England, by Anglo-Saxonism, over the thought and customs of America" the second, Anglo-Saxonism being "synonymous with heavy animalism."

Not being at present concerned with the question of the soundness of this view, I will only observe that the writer himself refutes his first assertion by the statement that the American "as a whole is built up from the very best and richest variety of ethnological materials. As a composite of Celtic, Roman, and Teutonic blood, the American people naturally inherits the aptitudes and qualities that are peculiar to each of the extensive families of the great Aryan race." Inasmuch as no one can claim that the character of the European emigration has at any time radically changed, the lowest classes compelling the high, higher, and highest to remain at home and going instead, it is obviously absurd to contend that the blessing has miraculously turned into a curse.

As to the remedy, it "will be found in the education of the upper classes of the nation"; but since the patrons of all our colleges and universities require "a small quantity and trashy quality of education," and decline to be bothered with ideals and art, "the American government ought to create national intellectual and educational institutions, such as is, for instance, the National University of France with all its faculties and colleges disseminated over the whole land, and crowned by a great institute composed of all the intellectual lights."

One thing is certain: the writer assuredly is without either the "brilliancy" of the Celtic blood, the "wisdom and polished acuteness" of the Latin, or the "deepness and patient thoroughness" of the Teutonic. Else he would have seen that his proposal conflicts with the fundamental principles of this so-called free government; that the "public servants," the legislators, cannot make appropriations for what the masters decide to exclude; and that it is not the business of delegates to raise the intellectual and artistic standard of their superiors, but to execute their will. The writer should address himself to the patrons of the colleges and to the youth of the country; he should endeavor to popularize his ideas and to raise the intellectual standard of the people. If he sees no promise of success in this direction, he must appeal to private benevolence.

And besides, dull indeed must be the man who expects encouragement of true art from the government. If he has not forgotten all the lessons of experience, it is because he never knew them. Government is naturally and constitutionally opposed to everything that is original, fresh, sparkling, or audacious. It invariably clings to the old, the popular, and the regular. But then, I seem to have lost sight of the fact that only the conventional and conservative need and solicit the protection and aid of authority. The bold, the progressive, the ingenious, and the brilliant delight in a free field and no favors. V. Y.

Principles and Factors of Social Progress.

One often encounters a seemingly plausible argument in support of authoritarian Socialism which perhaps has not received sufficient consideration from our side. It is well known that, with the exception of some few Socialist writers whose mistake of supposing themselves deep philosophers hardly anybody is simple enough to share, authoritarians persist in assuring their listeners or readers that the perfect development of individuality is their devoutly-wished-for end, and that their plans of compulsory regulation are conceived and pushed in the interest of personal liberty. We are triumphantly told that, since we profess to believe, with all Socialists, that ignorance and vice are the unavoidable result of extreme poverty and demoralizing privation, and that individual manhood and social health are not to be hoped for in a state of economic servitude such as the people now endure, it can only be in consequence of a singular short-sightedness that we refuse to apply ourselves to the labor of securing for the helpless masses that economic freedom which is essential to their development; of solving for them that vital problem which they cannot be expected to solve for themselves, or even to properly master and appreciate, in their present oppressed condition; of conquering for them that which they themselves will not attempt to acquire. The proposition that the enslaved masses cannot cultivate any of the

virtues of mind or heart that exalt and beautify the human personality while remaining in slavery, but need to be emancipated in order to become possessed of the opportunities for such culture, is alleged to be utterly inconsistent with our Anarchistic view of progress, — with our determination to abjure all forms of force and to wait for spontaneous and peaceful evolution of a higher social order. Hence we are invited to continue for a time the use of force in the interest of the liberty which shall spring from the new economic organization.

Certainly one thing at least is to be admitted in favor of these opponents: they perceive that the social problem is not so easy and simple a matter as the revolutionary Socialists of the Marx school thought, and they trust less in "historical necessity" than in intelligence and reason. To Marx, "the transformation of scattered private property," or the system historically preceding capitalism, "into capitalistic private property is naturally a process incomparably more protracted, violent, and difficult than the transformation of capitalistic private property into socialized property," or government control of industry, because, instead of the "expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers," we have now "the expropriation of a few usurpers by the masses of the people"; and although Marx was keenly alive to the low state of the proletariat's mental culture, he called upon the workers to unite and forcibly dethrone capitalism. "Along," he held, "with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital ... grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but *with this* (italics mine) too grows the revolt of the working class, — a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized, by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself." This was written many years ago, and since then the absurdity of the gospel "the worse, the better," has been more and more becoming apparent. Along with increasing misery and wretchedness grows callousness and stupidity and low, savage selfishness, rather than a spirit of revolt and criticism; and the spirit of wild, disorderly rebellion that occasionally *is* fostered by starvation and misery is at all events *not* the spirit conducive to rational activity in the direction of reform and wise social reorganization. Marx's predictions have not been fulfilled, and his confidence in "historical necessity" is seen to be nothing more than a fatalistic, one-sided, wholly irrational view of human progress. Few men would now venture to dispute the precisely opposite conclusion to that of Marx, — that the transformation of the present semi-individualistic society into one more harmonious, stable, and organic, is a process incomparably more protracted, difficult, and complicated (though far less violent on that account) than any humanity ever yet found itself engaged or involved in. The cry is not "still they come," — the expropriators and firmly resolved revolutionists; the demand now is for thinkers, students, reasoners, and philosophers, who treat social problems scientifically and who move to practical action by thoroughly convincing the mind of the utility of a given progressive measure.

But, having said this, the vital importance of the question whether reform is to be imposed upon the masses by the intelligent minority, as the authoritarians propose, or whether it is to be slowly introduced without the least violation of liberty, as the Anarchists design, becomes still more evident.

Now, it would be hypocritical to pretend that the coming changes in social organization will be effected, not as all changes have been, by the intellectually superior minority, but by the whole people acting consciously in unison. We shall not deny that history must repeat itself, and the minority will have to prepare the people for the acceptance of the new arrangements, in a large measure, by showing them the benefits of their practical workings; in other words, the minority will have to inaugurate reforms before the people will really comprehend or aspire to them. But the question is whether history must repeat itself also in another respect, — whether the minority must seek to obtain political authority by the aid of numerous elements admittedly incapable of deliberately endorsing its aims and ends, and then enforce these last upon the whole society regardless of the protests of the portion whose interests and ideas conflict with its own. So, to be sure, it has been; so it now is; but must it be so hereafter? Is there no better, wiser way? We claim that there is.

And the better way is to appeal solely to reason and to the sentiments of fairness, honor, dignity, that are proper to all men not completely turned into "human beasts." It is a better way not because it is more just, right, or virtuous from an abstract standpoint, but because it is admirably adapted to the end in view, because it is found to insure success. It was not difficult to gain religious or political liberty by force. Even if the masses were not in favor of the reform, they certainly were not bent upon opposing it. But it is otherwise with the great economic changes now on the programme. Not only the people's hostility, but their indifference, would be fatal to the new order. To force them into new conditions is to invite disaster and failure, and to check the progressive tendency. If we merely enlarge the opportunities of development, without artificially organizing a social system, there is ground for hope that our conduct and example will be imitated and adopted, provided it commends itself by its superior merits.

While, therefore, it is true that the minority will accomplish much for the masses, it will do it in an indirect, quiet, and unobtrusive manner. When it is sufficiently strong for the purpose, it will compel the governmental machine to increase the industrial and political freedom of the citizen, and will take advantage of the increased liberty to exhibit the benefits of its methods of work. At the same time the increased liberty will of itself tend to raise the material and spiritual standard of all social elements.

Instead of imposing upon society a new economic organization which shall result in freeing the individual (as the claim is), we seek to secure the freedom which shall allow the growth of a new economic order.

V. Y.

The Best Spirit of the Age.

Dear Tucker:

I said nothing to your rejoinder to my "By Way of Reply," for I was perfectly willing you should have the last word, and indeed felt that there was no need of my saying more to strengthen a position already strong enough. My condemnation of your policy of personal attack seems to have stung you the most, however (I confess I am glad of that), and as you challenge me to say a little more on that point, I will not refuse.

Perhaps you may justify yourself by showing how many other good men share your mistake, but I doubt it.

Perhaps you may demonstrate that my idea that the best spirit of the age is one of pure and impartial intellectual investigation, impersonal, tolerant, respectful, dispassionate; seeking the truth and the truth only; too accustomed to magnificent and generous sweeps of thought, too wise, and pitiful, and helpful, to be able to stoop from its serene dignity to bandy epithets or uncover little shames; perhaps you may demonstrate that this idea is solely "evolved from my inner consciousness," and that all the world's great minds wist not of it.

Very well — if you demonstrate this, I shall, with the monumental and adamantine egoism of an Anarchist, reply that in that case my mind is the greatest mind of all, that there are no other great minds, and that in myself is enshrined the best spirit of the age.

Unfortunately for my fame, however, but fortunately for humanity, this honor I cannot claim. In "civilized" society today — constituting its only truly civilized part — is a strong element of quiet, earnest minds, usually saying little, thinking broadly, deeply, tolerantly; without malice, or bitterness, or scorn, or dogmatism; hearing all, loving all, and slowly, but surely, helping all, — in these is incarnated the best spirit of the age, and they are the unseen saviours of the race.

Nor are they without representatives. You ask me to point out the superiors of the men you mention, and unhesitatingly I point to Darwin, Emerson, Spencer If the record speaks true, not Jesus Christ himself was so gentle and truthful and serene a spirit as Charles Darwin. Who will say that the man who with unalterable gentleness, and unalterable courage, was unalterably devoted to the discovery and teaching of pure truth, did not embody in himself the best spirit of this age? Who ever heard of Charles Darwin stopping in his sublime march of discovery to call some mentally deformed fellow man a liar, a fool, or a jackass?

That which was true of Darwin, — is it not true of Spencer? Was it not true of Emerson? Is it, or was it, not true of all those who, in the very next paragraph to the one in which you challenge me, you list as "the highest sociological and philosophical writers of the century, — Mill, Humboldt, Emerson, Spencer, Buckle"?

But I do not wish to detract one iota from the merited fame of the men you mention. In so far as they have wisely labored for liberty and civilization, I honor them as much as man may, but I cannot honor, or forget, their mistakes.

In your list, Carlyle is typical; and of him, another of your chosen ones, Swinburne, says that his was

> ..... the lip that stung men's memories;

and again —

> Forgive me that with bitter words like his
> I mix the gentlest English name that is —

and yet again —

> These deathless names, by this dead snake defiled,
> Bid memory spit upon him for their sake.

Evidently your chosen witnesses do not agree as to the merit and beauty of attacking reputations.

But I do not deny that there are times and places where personal criticism and personal reproof are unavoidable, just as the fist and the pistol are sometimes defensively unavoidable. I simply plead for reluctance in their use.

Before human beings can ever attain liberty, they must attain the love of harmony. Where there is indifference to harmony, there is willingness to fight; where there is willingness to fight, there is willingness to invade, that fights may be provoked; and where there is any willingness to invade, liberty is an unwelcome stranger.

Courtesy is the very breath of liberty. The system which you have elected to endorse — the system of defaming a man to refute his arguments — is the system that the priests, and lawyers, and politicians have always used and still use — the most potent gag that authority and sophistry ever placed between the lips of truth. It is the system that wins by stirring up passion and prejudice; the sophistry that teaches that a man is always a cripple because he once stumbled; that because he is blind in one eye, he is blind in both eyes; because he cannot add figures, he cannot write his name; because he was once inconsistent, or mistaken, or deceptive, he is everywhere and forever crazy, idiotic, and unworthy of belief; it is the system which willingly blights a reputation to score a point.

And the best spirit of the age, that I speak of, is the spirit that would eliminate human errors, not by attacking them, and thus stimulating them to stubborn growth, but by broad teaching and noble example, letting in such a flood of pure light, and setting up such a sharp contrast of wise conduct, that the errors shrink away of themselves, shame-facedly, into oblivion.

Forgive me, Comrade, if I seem to rebuke impertinently, or overmuch. It is because I love and respect you so much, because your position is such an important one, because you can do so much to make or mar the success of the cause whose success is so absorbingly in my thoughts, that I cannot be silent where I deem you are making a mistake so fatally reactionary.

As ever, your friend,

J. Wm. Lloyd.

Sounds beautifully, doesn't it, dear reader? But you have doubtless observed and remembered that my rebuking apostle of sweetness and light, who in his own opinion is the incarnation of the best spirit of the age, declares in the first paragraph of his letter that he is glad that he has stung me. *Glad*, mind you, GLAD! Now, if I deserved to be stung and if he has stung me (both of which "ifs" to me are unrealities), from my standpoint he ought to be glad; but such a feeling on his part is an obvious and complete denial of his own position and professions. It might well relieve me from saying anything further. But I go on.

Mr. Lloyd originally said that my system of polemics was behind the best spirit of the age. That he did not mean by this simply that it was behind his own spirit was evident from the hint in his very next sentence that specimens of such polemics were to be regarded as "curious and regretful relics of an outworn barbarism of manners." I, in rejoinder, called his attention to the style employed by some of the foremost men of the present day. Now he answers that perhaps I may prove that all the world's great minds employ the system of polemics that I employ, but that nevertheless he shall still maintain that the spirit that he defends is the best spirit of the age, because the best spirit of the age is the spirit that he defends. In my last extended reply to Mr. Lloyd I convicted him of four species of sins against logic; I must now charge him with a fifth, — that of reasoning in a circle. Mr. Lloyd declared that A is equal to B. I demonstrated the falsity of this by showing that B is equal to C while A is not equal to C. Mr. Lloyd retorts that, while I may prove that B is equal to C and

that A is not equal to C, nevertheless A is equal to B because B is equal to A.

Barring its mathematical defect, however, Mr. Lloyd's claim that in a certain case his is the only great mind is quite the most virile portion of his letter, and my admiration of it is as earnest as my dissent from it.

My challenge to Mr. Lloyd to name the superiors of the men whom I cited is met by pointing to Darwin, Emerson, and Spencer. Superiors undoubtedly these are in some ways, but in some ways also inferiors. Was Darwin a greater poet than Swinburne? Was Emerson a greater economist than Proudhon? Is Spencer a greater artist than Ruskin? I asked to be pointed to men superior as "civilized writers and best representatives of the age." All these men belong in the very front rank, but in different departments. They are all representative of the highest. I said that the great majority of such men (I was very careful not to say *all* of them) took the combative attitude, from which it follows of course that, if Mr. Lloyd is to maintain the non-combative, he must do so on its intrinsic merits, and not by appeal to the best spirit of the age.

But there is a way of accounting for the gentleness of such men as Darwin, Emerson, and Spencer by reason of the fitness of things rather than by reason of superiority. Such men are essentially men of the cloister. They do not mingle with the world. They do not go to battle. Other men do their fighting for them, but it has to be done by somebody. Darwin and Emerson never left the cloister; consequently they were always gentle. Spencer sometimes leaves it for the battle-ground, and then he uses the weapons of battle. Proudhon was always in the thick of the fight, and he lived in conformity with his habitat. And so do all great men and true. They do the work that is for them to do in the way that it should be done.

Swinburne's complaint against Carlyle was not a disagreement with him "as to the merit and beauty of attacking reputations." It was a complaint that Carlyle had attacked where attack was undeserved. This is a question of fact, and as such is unrelated to the issue between Mr. Lloyd and myself; we are dealing with a question of method.

But at last Mr. Lloyd admits that there are times when we must fight; only we should do so reluctantly. That is my ground exactly. I heartily wish that no fighting was necessary. But reluctance is not half-heartedness, and, when I see that I must or should fight, I do so with all the force there is in me. Only in this sense have I any willingness to fight, and I deny that it is accompanied by any willingness to invade. There is nothing about which I am so scrupulously careful as the avoidance of invasion. Mr. Lloyd's assertion on this point is on a par in point of accuracy with his next,—that I endorse the system of defaming a man to refute his arguments,—and his next,—that I consider a man altogether crazy because he is once mistaken. The files of Liberty will show that I have expressly denounced the application of epithets without refutation of arguments, and have asserted that a man is not necessarily a fool because he has said a foolish thing. Mr. Lloyd thinks it a very heinous offence to attack an opponent, but evidently regards it a very trivial offence, or rather no offence at all, to distort his utterances.

In conclusion, the best spirit of the age, in my view, is the spirit that would eliminate human errors, not alone by broad teaching and noble example, but by attack properly timed.

As for rebukes of my course, they are always in order. I have only to say to my rebukers: Be sure you're right before you go ahead. T.

F. Q. Stuart answers a recent paragraph of mine so timorously that it is plain that he sees the uncertainty of his ground. I had asked him to specify that half of the law of equal freedom which he had said that the Anarchists neither recognize nor understand. He says in reply that they content themselves with saying that "every person has a natural right to do as he wills," eliminating the additional words, "provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other person." True. They similarly eliminate the last half of the following statement: Three times four are twelve, provided four times three are not thirteen. The Anarchists do not believe in tautology. Does the word *every* mean anything to Mr. Stuart? I had also asked him to explain his charge that the Anarchists compromise their principle in accepting voluntary associations while opposing the State. Before giving this explanation, he wishes some questions answered. Here they are, followed by my respective replies. "1. Do you favor the abolition of the State *per se*?" Answer: Yes. "2. Do you favor the abolition of the compulsory features of the State?" Answer: Yes. "3. Do you maintain that ALL characteristics of the State are compulsory?" Answer: Yes. "4. What is the State?" Answer: The embodiment of the principle of invasion in an individual, or band of individuals, assuming to act as representatives or masters of the entire people within a given area. Now I renew my question. Where is the compromise?

"I am suffering under an avalanche of powerful criticism," says F. Q. Stuart, editor of the "Individualist"; "Lum is after me, Tucker is after me, Walker is after me, Pentecost is after me, Lloyd is after me, Yarros is after me." Not so, Stuart; you are after them,—a long way after them.

Mr. Stuart's Stride to Freedom.

Dear Liberty:

I see our friend Stuart of the "Individualist" has been indulging in a reverie. I found it interesting. Some twelve years ago it seems his unbiassed mind reached certain conclusions, and in the main they are his opinions still, and he feels a pardonable pride in their originality, having, as he says, "done little valuable reading prior to this time." And after reading Spencer, Andrews, George, and others, he was only strengthened in his belief. He tells of his early struggles in presenting his views. "I was regarded as crank, as visionary, flighty, and, I doubt not, in some instances my sanity questioned." Mr. Stuart took one long step, getting ahead of the age, as his brother thought, at least a hundred years. The latter advised him "to drop such lines of thought and turn my (his) attention to the practical affairs of life." "But," says Mr. Stuart, "the cross once shouldered, is not so easily unburdened. There is no halting-place on the road to freedom." And so we are to suppose that in the one long stride Mr. Stuart reached "freedom." His journey ended. His goal reached. And so we find him where he pitched his tent twelve years ago. And the rock on which he builded his Church is Spencer's negative government. And over the door-post he would tack the legend, "Freedom." And I thought of the many examples of religious and political zeal, wherein the searchers for freedom had been equally successful, and how positive each and all have been that theirs was the true El Dorado.

But "the active radicals of Denver," he says, "admire papers and writers that advocate the total abolition of the State. This I do not advocate. They are opposed to majority rule; I am not. They detest, despise, and abhor the ballot; I do not. They believe 'every one shall have freedom to do as he wills at his own cost'; I do not. They believe in Anarchy; I do not." From this it appears that Mr. Stuart's "freedom," like that of the greenback, single-tax, socialistic, and all other political isms, is a supposed panacea; which he, as a free individual, has a perfect right to propose. And his individualism is simply that of the independent voter. In another issue he quotes approvingly, and I may say appropriately, the words of Ingersoll: "I am not an Anarchist; anarchism is the reaction from tyranny. I am not a Communist. I am not a Socialist. I am an Individualist."

Now I have no objection to his presenting his cure-all and labelling it individualism, but I do protest against his definition of Anarchy. One can easily excuse Mr. Ingersoll, for, if ignorance is not a sin to be winked at, it is at least an extenuating circumstance. If he has any knowledge of the philosophy, he is very careful not to let anybody know it. Mr. Ingersoll's "Anarchist" is simply an ignorant Irishman with a club proclaiming himself "agin the government." Now, Mr. Stuart, with all his "valuable reading," would place us in a more ridiculous position still,—as simply fighting the *word* government, and striving to substitute the *word* Anarchy. Has a little adverse criticism so turned the brain of our friend of Denver that he needs must accept the advice of King Lear:

> Get the glass eyes;
> And, like a scurvy politician, seem
> To see the things thou dost not.

As Mr. Stuart believes in ballot decisions and majority rule, is it not a little inconsistent for him to "pitch in" to the police of Denver? Are they not the creatures of the ballot? Ought he not to "bow to the will of the majority?" He advises his friend Mr. James to "keep cool," and he may again be reelected to "the town council of Eau Claire." If we can successfully "catch on" to the political whirligig, we shall certainly "get there" in time. While I object to political methods in as much as they are an invasion of my liberty, I have no objection to Mr. Stuart or any other man advocating them. I can admire him for not claiming to be an Anarchist. With Mr. James it is different. I have only contempt for a man who will preach Anarchy and practise politics. So far as self-respect is concerned, I think I had as lief be found handling stolen goods or manufacturing burglars' tools as identifying myself in local politics. Mr. James's communication in the "Individualist" did not surprise me. When a man sets out to force people to accept his methods, he may very consistently advocate dynamite when ballots fail. But Mr. Stuart is a man of peace, and believes in the good old motto:

> If at first you don't succeed,
> Try, try again.

Mr. Stuart believes in repealing and forbidding all duty-enforcing law, leaving the government a sort of police regulation for preserving order, restraining criminals and punishing crime, and protecting all men in their "natural" rights, which are, "to do whatsoever he wills, provided in the doing thereof he infringes not the equal rights of any other person." Of course, there will be no trouble in deciding what is natural, and when man infringes. We shall have as "great a muchness" of lawyers and courts as ever, who will kindly relieve the citizen from considering these fine points. Now, I am not going to deny that this would be a step in the right direction, even if the evils of government were increased rather than diminished, which I am inclined to think would be the case. For, his free trade, free money, and free contract would be such a lesson in freedom that his negative government would not long be tolerated. The only trouble would be that its increased efficiency (I suppose he follows Spencer in the idea "that it should be exercised much more effectually, and carried out much farther than at present") might so strengthen its strong arm that a bloody rebellion with its usual consequences would result. It seems to me that such a government, in so far as it has jurisdiction, is as much a denial of individual sovereignty, and thereby may be as tyrannical and obnoxious, as any present forms. The negative idea supposes a perfectly unbiassed official, which would be an impossibility. To me hope lies in a decreased efficiency, and a spreading out of government, until the citizen, constantly breaking through, awakes to the fact that humanity may be trusted to take care of itself and do away with the encumbrance altogether. There is one idea, very important to the Anarchist, which the philosophy of our friend does not seem to recognize, and that is human justice and equity. In recognizing duty, as the fulfilment of honest contract, we believe that honorable payment is of vastly more concern to human happiness than restraining criminals or generally preserving "order." It is justice which leads the Anarchist to hate government. Convincing himself that the two cannot exist together, he decides that Government must go. It is justice which makes him abhor and despise the ballot; he knows that it not only perpetuates injustice, but engenders vice and crime degrading to manhood and corrupting to youth. And "majority rule" is an excuse for the Devil Politics to work his evil. Majority rule is a lie. "The State is a trick." Money and cunning have gained the supremacy, enslaving labor, and, by the aid of religion and superstition, have so fortified their position that their dupes will hug their chains and even boast of their liberty.

The glamour of superstition so bewilders and deceives that otherwise clear-sighted men, like Mr. Stuart, imagine that freedom may dwell under government. Pollock says: "In every form of government we come at last to some power which is absolute, to which all other powers of the State are subject, and which itself is subject to none." This is State sovereignty. Substitute it for God, and the words of Bakounine are equally true. "A master, whoever he may be, and however liberal he may desire to show himself, remains none the less always a Master. His existence necessarily implies the slavery of all beneath him . . . . only in one way could it serve human liberty—by ceasing to exist." Let Mr. Stuart grasp the principle. Liberty implies individuality. Subject to sovereignty, liberty becomes license. In liberty we grow; in license we degenerate. Let him ponder the words of Auberon Herbert: "Have not the faculties grown in every field just as freedom has been given them? Have men ever clung to protection and restraint and officialism without entangling themselves deeper and deeper into evils from which there was no outlet?" "Shall we not trust Liberty?" cries Mr. George, and immediately sets out to show "how not to do it." Freedom, the watchword of all parties, means all things to all men. As a principle it has never been trusted.

Anarchism signifies that trust.

A. L. Ballou.

Buffalo, N. Y.

Continued from page 5.

have not the privilege to work. You who have not fuel, be thankful that you have shelter; many walk the street! And you street walkers, be grateful that there are hell-lighted dens of the city; in the country you might die upon the roadside. Goaded human race! Be thankful for your goad. Be submissive to the Lord, and kiss the hand that lashes you!" Once more misery is the diet of the many, while the few receive, in addition to their rights, those rights of their fellows which government has wrested from them. Once more the hypothesis is that the Government, or Authority, or God in his other form, owns all the rights, and grants privileges according to its sweet will.

The freethinker who should determine to question it would naturally suppose that one difficulty in the old investigation was removed. He would say, "at least this thing Government possesses the advantage of being of the earth, — earthy. This is something I can get hold of, argue, reason, discuss with. God was an indefinable, arbitrary, irresponsible something in the clouds, to whom I could not approach nearer than to his agent, the priest. But this dictator, surely I shall be able to meet it on something like possible ground." Vain delusion! Government is as unreal, as intangible, as unapproachable as God. Try it, if you don't believe it. Seek through the legislative halls of America and find, if you can, the Government. In the end you will be doomed to confer with the agent, as before. Why, you have the statutes! Yes, but the statutes are not the government; where is the power that made the statutes? Oh, the legislators! Yes, but the legislator, *per se*, has no more power to make a law for me than I for him. I want the power that gave him the power. I shall talk with him; I go to the White House; I say: "Mr. Harrison, are you the government?" "No, madam, I am its representative." "Well, where is the principal? — Who is the government?" "The people of the United States." "The whole people?" "The whole people." "You, then, are the representative of the people of the United States. May I see your certificate of authorization?" "Well, no; I have none. I was elected." "Elected by whom? the whole people?" "Oh, no. By *some* of the people, — *some* of the *voters*." (Mr. Harrison being a pious Presbyterian, he would probably add: "The majority vote of the whole was for another man, but I had the largest electoral vote.") "Then you are the representative of the electoral college, not of the whole people, nor the majority of the people, nor even a majority of the voters. But suppose the largest number of ballots cast had been for you: you would represent the majority of the voters, I suppose. But the majority, sir, is not a tangible thing; it is an unknown quantity. An agent is usually held accountable to his principals. If you do not know the individuals who voted for you, then you do not know for whom you are acting, nor to whom you are accountable. If any body of persons has delegated to you any authority, the disposal of any right or part of a right (supposing a right to be transferable), you must have received it from the individuals composing that body; and you must have some means of learning who those individuals are, or you cannot know for whom you act, and you are utterly irresponsible as an agent.

"Furthermore, such a body of voters can not give into your charge any rights but their own; by no possible jugglery of logic can they delegate the exercise of any function which they themselves do not control. If any individual on earth has a right to delegate his powers to whomsoever he chooses, then every other individual has an equal right; and if each has an equal right, then none can choose an agent for another, without that other's consent. Therefore, if the power of government resides in the *whole people*, and out of that whole all but one elected you as their agent, you would still have no authority whatever to act for the *one*. The individuals composing the minority who did not appoint you have just the same rights and powers as those composing the majority who did; and if they prefer not to delegate them at all, then neither you, nor any one, has any authority whatever to coerce them into accepting you, or any one, as their agent — for upon your own basis the coercive authority resides, not in the majority, not in any *proportion* of the people, but in the whole people."

Hence "the overthrow of government" as a coercive power, thereby denying God in another form.

Upon this overthrow follows, the Cardinal says, the disruption of social and civil order!

Oh! it is amusing to hear those fellows rave about social order! I could laugh to watch them as they repeat the cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" "Down on your knees and adore this beautiful statue of Order," but that I see this hideous, brainless, disproportioned idol come rolled on the wheels of Juggernaut over the weak and the helpless, the sorrowful and the despairing. Hate burns, then, where laughter dies.

Social Order! Not long ago I saw a letter from a young girl to a friend; a young girl whose health had been broken behind a counter, where she stood eleven and twelve hours a day, six days in the week, for the magnificent sum of $5. The letter said: "Can't you help me to a position? My friends want me to marry a man I do not like, because he has money. Can't you help me? I can sew, or keep books. I will even try clerking again rather than that!" Social Order! When the choice for a young girl lies between living by inches and dying by yards at manual labor, or becoming the legal property of a man she does not like because he has money!

Walk up Fifth Avenue in New York some hot summer day, among the magnificent houses of the rich; hear your footsteps echo for blocks with the emptiness of it! Look at palaces going to waste, space, furniture, draperies, elegance, — all useless. Then take a car down town; go among the homes of the producers of that idle splendor; find six families living in a five-room house, — the sixth dwelling in the cellar. Space is not wasted here, — these human vermin rub each other's elbows in the stifling narrows; furniture is not wasted, — these sit upon the floor: no echoing emptiness, no idle glories! No — but wasting, strangling, choking, vicious human life! Dearth of vitality there — dearth of space for it here! This is social order!

Next winter, when the "annual output" of coal has been mined, when the workmen are clenching their hard fists with impotent anger, when the coal in the ground lies useless, hark to the cry that will rise from the freezing western prairies, while the shortened commodity goes up, up, up, eight, nine, ten, eleven dollars a ton; and while the syndicate's pockets are filling, the grave-yards fill, and fill. Moralize on the preservation of social order!

Go back to President Grant's administration, — that very "pure republican" administration; — see the settlers of the Mussel Slough compelled to pay thirty-five, forty dollars an acre for the land reclaimed from almost worthlessness by hard labor, — and to whom? To a corporation of men who never saw it! whose "grant" lay a hundred miles away, but who, for reasons of their own, saw fit to hire the "servants of the people" to change it so. See those who refused to pay it shot down by order of "the State"; watch their blood smoke upward to the heavens, sealing the red seal of Justice against their murderers; and then — watch a policeman arrest a shoeless tramp for stealing a pair of boots. Say to yourself, this is civil order and must be preserved. Go talk with political leaders, big or little, on methods of "making the slate," and "railroading" it through the ward caucus or the national convention. Muse on that "peaceful weapon of redress," the ballot.

Consider the condition of the average "American sovereign" and that of his "official servant," and prate then of civil order.

Subvert the social and civil order! Aye, I would destroy, to the last vestige, this mockery of order, this travesty upon justice!

Break up the home? Yes, every home that rests on slavery! Every marriage that represents the sale and transfer of the individuality of one of its parties to the other! Every institution, social or civil, that stands between man and his right; every tie that renders one a master, another a serf; every law, every statute, every be-it-enacted that represents tyranny; everything you call American privilege that can only exist at the expense of international right. Now cry out, "Nihilist — disintegrationist!" Say that I would isolate humanity, reduce society to its elemental state, make men savage! It is not true. But rather than see this devastating, cankering, enslaving system you call social order go on, rather than help to keep alive the accursed institutions of Authority, I would help to reduce every fabric in the social structure to its native element.

But is it true that freedom means disintegration? Only to that which is bad. Only to that which ought to disintegrate.

What is the history of freethought?

Is it not so, that since we have Anarchy there, since all the children of the brain are legitimate, that there has been less waste of intellectual energy, more coöperation in the scientific world, truer economy in utilizing the mentalities of men, than there ever was, or ever could be, under the authoritative dominion of the Church? Is it not true that with the liberty of thought, Truth has been able to prove herself without the aid of force? Does not error die from want of vitality when there is no *force* to keep it alive? Is it not true that unrestricted competition in thought has brought out the best that is in men, and instead of making them enemies, rendered them friends and associates? Is it not true that natural attractions have led men into associative groups, who can best follow their chosen paths of thought, and give the benefit of their studies to mankind with better economy than if some coercive power had said, "You think in this line — you in that"; or what the majority had by ballot decided it was best to think about?

I think it is true.

Follow your logic out; can you not see that *true economy lies in Liberty*, — whether it be in thought or action? It is not slavery that has made men unite for coöperative effort. It is not slavery that produced the means of transportation, communication, production, and exchange, and all the thousand and one economic, or what ought to be economic, contrivances of civilization. No — nor is it government. It is *Self-interest*. And would not self-interest exist if that institution which stands between man and his right to the free use of the soil were annihilated? Could you not see the use of a bank if the power which renders it possible for the national banks to control land, production, and everything else, were broken down?

Do you suppose the producers of the east and west couldn't see the advantage of a railroad, if the authority which makes a systematizer like Gould or Vanderbilt a curse were swept away? Do you imagine that government has a corner on ideas, now that the Church is overthrown; and that the people could not learn the principles of economy, if this intangible giant which has robbed and slaughtered them, wasted their resources and distributed opportunities so unjustly, were destroyed? I don't think so. I believe that legislators as a rule have been monuments of asinine stupidity, whose principal business has been to hinder those who were not stupid, and get paid for doing it. I believe that the so-called brainy financial men would rather buy the legislators than be the legislators; and the real thinkers, the genuine improvers of society, have as little to do with law and politics as they conveniently can.

I believe that "Liberty is the mother, not the daughter, of Order."

"But," some one will say, "what of the criminals? Suppose a man steals." In the first place, a man won't steal, ordinarily, unless that which he steals is something he can not as easily get without stealing; in liberty the cost of stealing would involve greater difficulties than producing, and consequently he would not be apt to steal. But suppose a man steals. Today you go to a representative of that power which has robbed you of the earth, of the right of free contract, of the means of exchange, taxes you for everything you eat or wear (the meanest form of robbery), — you go to him for redress from a thief! It is about as logical as the Christian lady whose husband had been "removed" by Divine Providence, and who thereupon prayed said Providence to "comfort the widow and the fatherless." In freedom we would not institute a wholesale robber to protect us from petty larceny. Each associative group would probably adopt its own methods of resisting aggression, that being the only crime. For myself, I think criminals should be treated as sick people.

"But suppose you have murderers, brutes, all sorts of criminals. Are you not afraid to lose the restraining influence of the law?" First, I think it can be shown that the law makes ten criminals where it restrains one. On that basis it would not, as a matter of policy merely, be an economical institution. Second, this is not a question of expediency, but of right. In *ante-bellum* days the proposition was not, Are the blacks good enough to be free? but, Have they the right? So today the question is not, Will outrages result from freeing humanity? but, Has it the right to life, the means of life, the opportunities of happiness?

In the transition epoch, surely crimes will come. Did the seed of tyranny ever bear good fruit? And can you expect Liberty to undo in a moment what Oppression has been doing for ages? Criminals are the crop of despots, as much a necessary expression of the evil in society as an ulcer is of disease in the blood; and so long as the taint of the poison remains, so long there will be crimes.

"For it must needs that offences come, but woe to him through whom the offence cometh." The crimes of the future are the harvests sown of the ruling classes of the present. Woe to the tyrant who shall cause the offence!

Sometimes I dream of this social change. I get a streak of faith in Evolution, and the good in man. I paint a gradual slipping out of the *now*, to that beautiful *then*, where there are neither kings, presidents, landlords, national bankers, stock-brokers, railroad magnates, patent-right monopolists, or tax and tithe collectors; where there are no overstocked markets or hungry children, idle counters and naked creatures, splendor and misery, waste and need. I am told this is far-fetched idealism, to paint this happy, povertyless, crimeless, diseaseless world; I *have* been told I "ought to be behind the bars" for it.

Remarks of that kind rather destroy the white streak of faith. I lose confidence in the slipping process, and am forced to believe that the rulers of the earth are sowing a fearful wind, to reap a most terrible whirlwind. When I look at this poor, bleeding, wounded World, this world that has suffered so long, struggled so much, been scourged so fiercely, thorn-pierced so deeply, crucified so cruelly, I can only shake my head, and remember:

The giant is blind, but he's thinking; and his locks are growing, fast.

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